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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to examine the predictive relationship between job values and early employment satisfaction and success as well as to provide information about the stability of job values over time. (Job values refer to generalized concepts of desirable future outcomes anticipated from jobs and describe qualities of satisfactions desired as a result of job performance.) Job value rankings on job security and pay were gathered from a national sample of eleventh graders and studied in relationship to job satisfactions, number of job changes, and job value ratings all reported two years after high school. In a follow-up study conducted in 1976, 5,293 of these students were given a survey which included items on job experience, college training experience, military experience, activities history, background, and plans. Complete data were available on job security rankings from 1,889 subjects and on pay rankings for 2,003 subjects. The findings indicated that approximately the same proportion of young workers were satisfied with the job security and pay in their present jobs regardless of whether they had ranked the respective value high or low in high school. Also job value rankings on job security did not predict frequency of job changes during early employment years. Finally, job value rankings for high school juniors were not consistent with their job value ratings three years later. No sex differences were observed for any of the comparisons. Apparently the use of job value rankings as predictors of future employment experiences (whether applied in exploratory or decisionmaking career guidance activities) must be incorporated with other information in order to predict early employment experiences. (TA)

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JOB VALUES AND EARLY EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCES:

A LONGITUDINAL STUDY

by

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Job values refer to generalized concepts of desirable future outcomes anticipated from jobs. They describe qualities of satisfactions desired as a result of job performance (e.g., having an interesting job, being independent, good pay, and security).

Values are a central concept in theories of job choice and job satisfaction. Decisions about jobs are thought to be based upon a person's values and expectancies. Jepsen and Dilley (1974) found that values play a key role in all current vocational decision-making models. Job values are also believed to have a direct influence on job satisfaction. Zytowski (1970) suggested that the values concept provides a link between the job entry and job satisfaction aspects of vocational behavior. There are at least two discrepancy theories about how values relate to job satisfaction (Lawler, 1973). Katzell (1964) hypothesized that satisfaction is a function of the relationship between desired amount of outcomes (i.e., values) and actual amount of outcomes. The second view advanced by Locke (1969) is that satisfaction is a function of the relationship between what a person wants from a job and what that person perceives it as offering. The key distinction is between objective outcomes (e.g., actual salary) and perceived outcomes (e.g., feeling about salary). This study is based on the latter interpretation.

Counselors and teachers are likely to find job values an appealing concept to use as they help people with career decisions. Value applications might be developed in several ways. For example, values describe common attributes across jobs and thus serve as a framework for organizing occupational knowledge. Values as qualities of satisfactions provide the basis for comparing jobs during decision-making. They also serve as reference points when people make unexpected job changes. Indeed consideration of values is emphasized in several popular guidance methods such as values

clarification (e.g., Simon, Howe, and Kirschenbaum, 1972) and decision-making programs (e.g., Gelatt, Varenhorst and Carey, 1972).

Several problems arise when incorporating job values into career guidance programs. Primarily, methods to assess values have not yet been fully developed. In fact, value theorists have not agreed upon the content and grouping of job values. Zytowski (1970) reviewed six major instruments assessing 25 different values and found only seven values were common to at least five of the measures. He found Ginzberg, Ginsburg, Axelrad, and Herma's (1951) trichotomy of intrinsic, extrinsic and concomitant values to be the most utilitarian set of structural limensions. Pay, job security, and prestige were included in all instruments and comprise extrinsic outcomes of work.

Application of job value measures to general student populations also presents difficulties. The several instruments available have seldom yielded scores that can be readily compared nor have they been used with large samples. Some measures ask for value rankings, others for ratings on values, and still others use forced choice or open-ended question formats.

Another consideration in the use of job values in career guidance is the ambiguity concerning their stability and predictability. If value assessments serve as the criteria for both pre-entry decisions and post-entry satisfactions, it is important that they yield information that is stable over time. Research on the stability of job values has produced conflicting evidence. Thompson (1966) found a high degree of similarity between job value ratings for 9th and 10th graders while Gribbons and Lohnes (1965) found a trend in value hierarchies from 8th grade to 12th grade which they characterized as change from idealism to realism. Zytowski (1970) concluded that the assumption of job value stability over time, especially over long periods, had not been sufficiently supported.

The predictive relationship between adolescents' expressed job values and early employment job satisfaction--the relationship with which school counselors and their clients are concerned--has not been clearly established. According to Locke's view (1970), a person's job satisfaction is the result of the degree to which some perceived facet of reality (e.g., pay) is congruent with his/her values (e.g., importance of pay). Mobley and Locke (1970) offered correlational evidence from five studies on college students and their work experiences to support the theory. Prediction of job satisfaction has been a major thrust of the Work Adjustment Project at the University of Minnesota (Lofquist and Dawis, 1975). However, their research has focused on employed adults and defines satisfaction as the correspondence between supervisor's (rather than worker's) perceptions of job realities and worker's needs.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the predictive relationship between job values and both early employment satisfaction and success as well as to provide information about the stability of job values over time. Thus, job value rankings on job security and pay were gathered from a national sample of 11th graders and studied in relationship to their reports about job satisfactions, number of job changes, and job value ratings all reported two years after high school.

Procedures

Sample

The sample for this study was the 1973 11th grade component from the American College Testing Program's (ACT) nationwide study of student career development (Prediger, Roth, & Noeth, 1973). This sample represented a target population of all full-time 11th grade students enrolled in public or Catholic schools in the United States in the spring of 1973. Stratification

variables included region of the country, size of community, and socioeconomic status. A complete description of this group is provided elsewhere (Bayless, Bergsten, Lewis & Noeth, 1974).

During the spring of 1976 the Institute for Demographic and Economic Studies (IDES) with cooperation from ACT undertook a follow-up study of these 1973 11th graders. This follow-up initially required obtaining current addresses of all sample members from the 72 high schools involved in the 1973 study. These addresses were then validated. Of the original 9,307 students, current addresses were obtained for 7,977. Those for whom current addresses were not available represented either those who had moved and left no forwarding address or students from four schools where officials would not release the addresses.

Follow-up procedures included an initial mailing of the survey (with a monetary incentive) followed two weeks later by a reminder postcard to nonrespondents. Two weeks after the postcard, a second survey was mailed to continued nonrespondents and all nonrespondents two weeks after this mailing were contacted by either telephone or through mailgrams. There was a total of 5,293 respondents to the follow-up survey which represented 66 percent of those for whom accurate, current addresses were available.

Instrumentation

The ACT Assessment of Career Development (ACD) was the instrument used in the 1973 study. The ACD is structured around the components of occupational awareness, self-awareness, and career planning and decision-making (ACT, 1974). For this present study, rankings of two items from the ACD Job Values section were selected. The first involved the value of pay (being well paid for my work) and the second involved the value of job

security (having a steady job where I would not be fired). These were two of six job value items (the other four included the values of co-workers, independence, interest, and responsibility). Students were to select one of the six job values and rank it as most important, rank another as second most important, and rank a third as least important. The remaining three items were to remain unranked.

The follow-up survey, developed by IDES, included job experience, college training experience, military experience, activities history, background, and plans. For this study, two items from the 1976 Job Experience section were selected: job satisfaction with pay and job satisfaction with the steadiness of the work. Individuals were to select one of the five ratings for each item as it pertained to their current job (as of March, 1976). These ratings were very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, no opinion, somewhat dissatisfied, and very dissatisfied. Also used was the item pertaining to the number of different employers from March 1, 1975 to March 1, 1976 (responses were one, two, and three or more). Individuals were to select the response that applied. Finally, two items in the Future Plans section (i.e., importance of good pay in a permanent job and importance of steady work in a permanent job) were selected. Individuals were to select one of three ratings as it related to the importance of each item in their choice of a permanent job. The three ratings were very important, somewhat important, and not important.

Analyses

Data gathered from the national sample were analyzed for the following research questions:

1. Are 11th grade job value rankings on job security and pay related to satisfaction ratings on job security and pay, respectively, two years after high school?

2. Are 11th grade job value rankings on job security related to number of job changes during the second year after high school?
3. Are 11th grade job value rankings on job security and pay related to ratings on the same values reported three years later?
4. Are there sex differences in each of the relationships for questions 1, 2, and 3?

Thus, the independent variables were job value rankings and the dependent variables were job satisfaction ratings, reported job changes, and job value ratings.

Prior to the analyses, the sample was screened on selected variables so that only those individuals whose work experiences would allow them to best evaluate levels of satisfaction and formulate future job values would be included in the study. Therefore, those sample members were included who had been employed during the first week of March, 1976 and at the time of the follow-up (between mid-March and mid-June, 1976), who had worked for at least three months during the 52-week period from March, 1975, to March, 1976, and who had worked more than 20 hours per week at their jobs. After this screening, cross-tabulations between 1973 ACD values and 1976 level of satisfaction, number of job changes, and future job values were undertaken for the total screened sample as well as for males and females separately. Hit rates between these selected ACD values and the follow-up data were thus obtained. Complete data were available on job security rankings from 1889 subjects and on pay rankings for 2003 subjects. Not included in the analyses were data from people involved in post-secondary education or training programs or military service, or who did not otherwise meet the selection criteria specified above.

Results

Job value rankings by high school juniors did not discriminate between

their levels of job satisfaction three years later. This was the case for the job values of job security and pay. For example, among those who ranked job security as their first or second most important value in 1973, 83% expressed satisfaction with the steadiness of their work in 1976. This compares to the proportion (85%) who ranked this value low in 1973 (i.e., as least important or did not give it a rank) but who also expressed satisfaction with the steadiness of their jobs in 1976. The results for the value of job security and pay are presented in Tables 1 and 2, respectively. Not tabled are the findings that little difference appeared between males and females on either of the value-satisfaction comparisons.

Rankings of job security in 1973 did not discriminate job changers from those who stayed on the same job during 1975-76. The proportion of workers who changed jobs during the year preceding the follow-up was virtually the same for those who gave job security a high ranking (43%) as for those who ranked it low (41%) (see Table 3). Again no differences occurred between males and females.

Finally, rankings on job security were not clearly predictive of ratings on the same two job values three years later. These results are presented in Tables 4 and 5. A slightly greater proportion (84% vs. 73%) of those who had ranked pay high, compared to those who had ranked it low, rated pay as very important three years later. However, the difference was not considered important for predictive purposes. As above, there were no differences between males and females.

Discussion

This study sought to extend the application of job values assessment to a broad sample of youth. Furthermore, it was an attempt to clarify

the predictability and stability of assessed job values over the early years of transition from high school to full-time employment.

The findings indicate that approximately the same proportion of young workers were satisfied with the job security and pay in their present jobs regardless of whether they had ranked the respective value high (first or second) or low in high school. Also job value rankings on job security did not predict frequency of job changes during early employment years. Finally, job value rankings for high school juniors were not consistent with their job value ratings three years later. No sex differences were observed for any of the comparisons.

Initially it appears that job value rankings, when used alone, do not predict levels of early employment satisfaction as defined in this study. Indeed those who rank pay as important would be expected to congregate in jobs where this value is met, moreso than those who do not rank this value as important. This did not occur in the present study. Also those who ranked job security high would be expected to seek more stable jobs and change less frequently than those who ranked security as a lower value. Again the findings do not support this expectation. Apparently the use of job value rankings as predictors of future employment experiences (whether applied in exploratory or decision-making career guidance activities) must be incorporated with other information in order to predict early employment experiences.

Also job value rankings in high school apparently are not consistent with later job ratings after two years of employment experience. The prediction of post-high school ratings on job satisfaction and job values from high school value rankings is limited by the use of different types of scales. A different picture of job values is obtained from 1976 ratings than 1973 rankings. For example, only 1/3 of the sample ranked pay high in 1973 but about 2/3 rated the job satisfaction of pay as very important in 1976 (see Tables 1 and 2). Comparing distributions of 1973 job value with

1976 job value ratings reveals almost identical reversals (see Tables 4 and 5). This pattern suggests that the type of scale may have influenced response patterns or, at least, the prima facae interpretation of their patterns. An alternative explanation, however, is that early employment experiences have affected value shifts.

Although value rankings alone failed to predict early employment experiences, perhaps the inclusion of mediating conditions might have affected the results. Since extrinsic values were studied, conditions such as availability of jobs, salary level, peer group support, or personal finances (e.g., debts, support from parents) may have influenced later expressed satisfactions and values. The results of this study raise questions about the usefulness of rankings alone in job value research. Perhaps job values is such a complex construct that a multiple assessment strategy is preferred. Varied behavior samples such as ratings, inventories, forced sum rankings, and short-answer questions might be used in combination to derive estimates of the intensity and direction of job values.

TABLE 1

1973 Job Security Value Ranking Compared to

1976 Satisfaction Rating on Job Security

	1976 Satisfaction Rating					
	Satisfied		Dissatisfied or No Opinion			
1973 Value Ranking	N	(%)	N	(%)	Total	(%)
Most or Second Most Important	278	(83%)	57	(17%)	335	(100%)
Least Important or Not Ranked	1319	(85%)	235	(15%)	1554	(100%)

TABLE 2

1973 Pay Value Ranking Compared to

1976 Satisfaction Rating on Pay

	1976 Satisfaction Rating					
	Satisfied		Dissatisfied of No Opinion			
1973 Value Ranking	N	(%)	N	(%)	Total	(100%)
Most or Second Most Important	445	(65%)	240	(35%)	685	(100%)
Least Important or Not Rated	819	(62%)	499	(38%)	1318	(100%)

TABLE 3

1973 Job Security Ranking Compared to

Number of Job Changes 1975-76

	Number of Job Changes 1975-76					
	No Changes		One or More Changes			
1973 Value Ranking	N	(%)	N	(%)	Total	(%)
Most or Second Most Important	190	(57%)	145	(43%)	335	(100%)
Least Important or Not Rated	921	(59%)	633	(41%)	1554	(100%)

TABLE 4

1973 Job Security Value Ranking Compared to

1976 Value Ratings on Job Security

	1976 Value Rating					
	Very Important		Somewhat/Not Important			
1973 Value Ranking	N	(%)	N	(%)	Total	(%)
Most or Second Most Important	297	(89%)	38	(11%)	335	(100%)
Least Important or Not Ranked	1303	(84%)	251	(16%)	1554	(100%)

TABLE 5

1973 Pay Value Ranking Compared to

1976 Value Rating on Pay

	1976 Value Rating					
	Very Important		Somewhat/Not Important			
1973 Value Ranking	N	(%)	N	(%)	Total	(%)
Most or Second Most Important	577	(84%)	108	(16%)	685	(100%)
Least Important or Not Ranked	965	(73%)	353	(27%)	1318	(100%)

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